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Sinkiang AI1.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SOCIETY

1. General Introduction

The Northwest of China, consisting of the four provinces: Shensi, Kansu, Chinghai, and Sinkiang, part of which is now called the Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region, comprises an area of 1.3 million square miles, (almost a third of all China), in which thirty-six million people live. There are at least four different racial types (Turanides, Sinides, Mongoloides and Tangutides) and more than a dozen different ethnic groups: Eastern Turks or New Uighur (Chin. Wei-wu-erh), Chinese (chin. Han), Chinese Muslims (chin. Han-hui or Tung-kan-hui, Engl. Dungans), Kazakhs (chin. Ha-sa-k'o), Kirghiz (chin. Chi-erh-chi-ssu) Uzbeks (chin. Wu-tzu-pieh-k'o), Tatars (chin. T'a-t'a-erh), Tajiks (chin. T'a-chi-k'o), Western Mongols or Oirats (chin. Ölöt or simply Meng-ku), Sarigh-Uighurs (chin. Tung-hsiang-hui-hui), Shera Yögur (chin. Tu-jen), Monguors (chin. also Tu-jen), Salars (chin. Sa-la), Tibetans (chin. Hsi-fan), Manchu (chin. Man), Sibo (chin. Hsi-po) and Solons (chin. So-lun). The last three ethnic groups, the Manchus, Sibos, and Solons are persistently listed in Communist censuses, although it has been proved that they are non-existent as linguistic units, or as separate ethnic groups. Numerically, the Chinese constitute the overwhelming majority in the Northwest (about thirty million).

While the Turks of the Northwest (i.e. New Uighurs, Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Uzbeks, Tatars and Salars) are rather firm believers in Islam (Mohammedanism), the Western Mongols, Sarigh-Uighurs (the latter are Turks), Shera Yögur, and Tibetans are faithful Buddhists of the northern form, also called Lama Buddhism, and the Chinese believe in a variety of religious or philosophical systems: Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and even Demonism and Animism.

The economic pattern of the Northwest as well displays an enormous variety; we find nomadic pastoralism among the Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Western Mongols, and Tibetans, intensive horticulture among the New Uighur of the oasis-belt of Sinkiang, agriculture by means of irrigation (kariz system. See chapter about agriculture) among Chinese (only fifteen percent of the Northwest agriculture is without any irrigation), sedentary Turks and Mongols, and a mixture of primitive agriculture and pastoralism among some Tibetan and Mongolian Tribes of Chinghai and Kansu. The Turkic and the Chinese Muslims are the bearers of the trade along the old "silk roads" of Sinkiang, Chinghai and Kansu. The urban centers of the Northwest are also centers of petty industry and handicraft. The newest

towards Russia, Turkey, and England. The cultural cohesion created by Islam that connects Chinese Turkestan with Russian Turkestan and other neighboring Muslim countries, and that created by Buddhism that connects Mongolia with Tibet through Chinghai and small areas of Sinkiang, marked the four provinces of Sinkiang, Chinhai, Kansu, and to a small degree, Shensi, as one single area which represents one administrative unit.

The Eastern Turks:

The main pattern of social life of the Eastern Turks is based primarily on "Oasis Agriculture" with its irrigational complex. All agriculture in this area is made possible through the organized use of water. The family organization among the Eastern Turks is therefore an extended one, since a certain level of productivity can only be reached through collective labor (upkeep of irrigational systems and dikes). One reason the Eastern Turks developed the extended family pattern is that the family recieves water in proportion to the amount of labor its members put into the upkeep of irrigational systems and canals; the greater the family, the more water is therefore provided for their land.

The Internal structure of the family system is not based upon clan rules. Eastern Turkic communities are governed by a body of leaders, selected from the community itself whereas the larger governmental districts are headed by Chinese officials or, at present, by Chinese Communists. A secondary aspect of Eastern Turkic social life is formed by trade and handicrafts. Merchants and craftsmen form "guilds" which in turn influence the social life of the community.

Kirghiz and Kazakhs:

Kirghiz and Kazakh society is clan-based. (The definition of the notion of "clan" is explained in the chapter about the Social Structure.) All family relationships are deeply rooted in the clan system. The main pattern of social life among these two tribes is created by their nomadic way of life, whose most essential economic activity is cattle breeding. The transition to a semi-sedentary life is now under way. The Communists insist that the Kirghiz and Kazakhs occupy a permanent winter camp site, since this facilitates better political control over the tribes. The choice of the summer camp site still remains more or less in the hands of the tribes. Kirghiz and Kazakhs are ruled by "bīks," or "manaps" (elders) responsible to the Chinese officials.

The Mongols: general remarks.

Mongol social life is based on nomadic pastoralism. The basic unit is the nuclear family. A group of patrilineally

of the average Chinese seems to be fatalistic, considering Providence or Heaven to determine his fortune in life. In general, the average Chinese is rather indifferent in religious matters, although he might be sensitive if someone looked askance on his belief in local spirits, demons, and gods, but this is merely a matter of tradition rather than religion.

The Chinese is strongly individualistic and usually dislikes to be ordered around and governed; he ardently defends his own opinions. His inclination for social groupings is obvious. Wherever Chinese live, they soon form integrated communities and at times of distress or in critical situations they are ready to help each other collectively, a characteristic tendency found especially within the extended family, which as a rule feels itself responsible as a whole for debts, misdeeds, etc., of any member. The Chinese are reported to be basically anti-militaristic, although this may be more a traditional attitude of the literati than a sound fact, considering only the last fifty years of Chinese history. However, a Chinese proverb says, "From good iron do not make nails; from good men do not make soldiers." To toil his fields in peace, to make a living this way, and to raise his children, whom he deeply loves, and not to be interfered with by state and government, can be described as the average conception of the "good life." The average Chinese of the Northwest lives in simple mud or stone houses (in the Yellow River area, caves of the adjacent loess hills), stove, k'ang, and ancestor altar being almost the only furniture.

Culture, art, and literature were primarily fostered by the richer merchants, land and water owners, and, or course, the officials and scholars. These groups represented, up to 1949, an economically powerful class who owned a considerable part of the land and the water rights. Chinese officials of the frontier provinces had a reputation for being extremely money-minded. The Chinese gentry, consisting of former officials and degree holders, who were in many cases at the same time holders of land or watter rights, have been abolished as a class, while large parts of the academic strata, the intelligentsia, became more or less the Communist avantgarde of China, showing the same phenomenon which appeared in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, etc., before and during the Second World War, where the intelligentsia showed a deep inclination towards Communism.

In regard to the nomadic minorities of the Northwest (Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Mongols and Tibetans) the dominant social motives are two fold, and can be subdivided into an economic and a religious one, equally strong. The whole economic life of the nomads is centered around their livestock. The nomad's life

depends on his herds: they are his only resource, his only wealth, and his only pride. When two nomads meet, whether they are Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Mongols, or Tibetans, the first subject that comes up is their cattle. Among nomads, social status is established by the possession of horses, camels, and livestock in general, and only secondarily determined by titles or descent. This is especially true for the Kirghiz, Kazakhs and Tibetans, and to a lesser degree for the Mongols, among whom aristocratic birth (real or imagined) plays an important role.

The average nomad's life can be described as follows: he lives in a roomy felt tent, furnished with house altar, in the case of Buddhists, or with an artistically made book-stand for the Quran in the case of Muslims, and some chests and carpets. The whole family takes care of the livestock, and periodically the migration unit moves during the summer time from pasture to pasture, preserving the richest and most protected grazing land for the winter time. The weather plays a fatal role in the welfare of the nomad's livestock, and every so often a migration unit (the ail, the aul, the ayir, the omoq, otoq, xotn, or uruq, the ulus or even the aimaq) loses its livestock. In this case, those clans which still own enough livestock divide their herds and lend part of them to those who suffered the loss. Collective cooperation is exercised in this respect by Kazakhs, Kirghiz and Mongols, while the nomadic Tibetans, in a similar situation, have quite a reputation for robbing neighboring tribes of their livestock.

The nomadic way of life, the close contact with nature and dependence on nature promotes animism, shamanism, and spiritualism, which goes hand in hand with the prevailing religions of Islam (in the case of the Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Salars, and some Tibetan clans) and Buddhism (in the case of the Mongols, Tibetans, and Sarigh-Uighurs). As a general rule, the nomadic Kirghiz and Kazakh are not very fanatic or ardent Muslims, and neither are the Mongols very pious Buddhists, but still, both feel strongly about their religious although they are rather lax in their observance. No matter how poor a Buddhistic nomad is, he voluntarily supports and feeds wandering lamas, invites several on major occasions (birth, death, and marriage if the bride's father can afford it), pays them, and finally is accustomed to the old tradition ot giving a small percentage of his livestock every year to Buddhistic monasteries. All nomads are very superstitious, and the relationship between cause and effect is often misinterpreted, e.g., in the case of disease or weather. It is safe to say that the dominant motives of the nomads are economic in the first place and religious in the second place.

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V. Individualistic and Collectivistic Bents and Traditions

The nomadic society of the Kirghiz, Kazakhs and Mongols shows collectivistic trends insofar as the pastures are always owned collectively and the livestock can be taken care of and protected only cooperatively. In periods of war and uprisings, the livestock had to be protected militarily, which was one reason why the military organization of the nomads, introduced by Chingis Khan, survived up to the twentieth century. Here we can say that the nomadic Kirghiz and Kazakh still shows a tremendous martial spirit, especially the Kazakhs who fought the Communists in 1949 and 1950 in a heroic way in spite of the fact that they were outnumbered from the very beginning.

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As a matter of fact, the Mongols show much less martial spirit than neighboring Kirghiz, Kazakh and especially Tibetans, who constantly rise up here and there, becoming a major nuisance for Peking, although they are hopelessly outnumbered by Chinese Communist Troops. Many explorers agree independently that the Mongols, once intrepid, dauntless, unafraid, frightful and terrifying warriors, make now the impression of being inefficient soldiers, timid, downhearted, and discouraged (so Rockhill, Howorth, Tafel, Vladimirtsov, Hedin, Futterer, and Filchner). Russian scholars, above all B. Vladimirtsov in his Le Regime Social Des Mongols, Le feodalisme Nomade, Paris 1948, blame Buddhism for the disappearance of the martial spirit and courage of the Mongols. This opinion is, however, contradicted by the fact that Tibetans, who have been influenced by Buddhism some centuries longer than the Mongols, are well-known as tough and cunning fighters and apparently fearless and daring insurgents.

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Almost every Tibetan family has at least one son in a monastery. They faithfully pay their tributes to these monasteries where their sons live as novices or monks. The monasteries are the only cultural centers of the nomads. Kumbum might be named as a magnificent example in regard to external architectural beauty as well as internal wealth in respect to its library, printing house, and the spiritual value of its schools and its Lamaistic academies.

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There are many reasons to believe that the Communist regime is determined to abolish nomadism and to make the nomads sedentary or at least semi-sedentary. The first step was the erection of permanent winter sites. The attitude of the nomads toward the regime seems to be ambivalent. The erection of veterinary stations for the livestock and the extension of additional irrigated pastures certainly are measures approved by the nomads but on the other hand the threatening

SN 563 668 233 deprivation of livestock and the progressing industrialization are certain to be the source of increasing discontent among the nomads.

SN 563 181 In summing up, the nomads are extremely freedom-conscious. Freedom of the individual is expressed by the everlasting dream of every nomad which finds its expression in the conception of the free rider who recognizes nothing but "the eternal power of the eternal heaven" (Mongolian saying), and who possesses nothing but his felt tent, his highly esteemed and valued horses and his herds. But, no doubt, the Communists will succeed as they did in Soviet Russia in destroying the picture of the independent rider of the steppes of Central Asia, the cradle of so many different peoples and magnificent cultures.

Within their own social structure and social units, the Nomads combine harmoniously individualistic and collectivistic trends of their pattern of life. Communistic collectivisation can be imposed upon them by force, of course, but they will hardly accept it in their minds.

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SN VI. Approach to Individual and National Problems

SN 563 181 153 The nomads of the Northwest work hard for their existence. It is easily understood that they need their whole energy for maintaining such a life, which is a constant struggle against the hardships of land, weather and against the centuries-old uncertain political environment. Under such circumstances the nomads developed very realistic minds. A realistic mind is implicitly logical in regard to political or daily matters of life, although the realization of the unpredictable inclemencies or favors of surrounding Nature gave rise to an illogical or, in terms of Jung's depth philosophy, a translogical conception of the relationship between man and Nature, whose favorable or unfavorable phenomena were brought into connection with their "good andbad" deeds, whereby "good and bad" do not have the same connotation as they do in our society; polygamy in the case of the Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Eastern Turks, polyandry in the case of the Tibetans, or murder of a personal dependent in the case of Kazakhs, for example, are never considered as "bad" deeds, but killing a louse, in the case of a Mongol, or killing of a yak calf (even if it is sick or hurt) in the case of Tibetans, are considered "bad" deeds.

SN 563 153 799 155 The nomadic Muslims (Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Salars and some Islamized Tibetan clans) as well as the sedentary Muslims (New-Uighurs, Uzbeks, Tatars, Tajiks, Chinese Muslims or Dungans) have on account of their religion a rather doctrinal

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a proponent of the theory of climatic alternations, called the phenomenon "the pulse of Asia."

The most important of the multiple influences is believed to be that of the economic effects of climatic changes. When the climate is warm and moist, the land of the nomads is fertile enough to support the nomads and their herds, but when the climate becomes drier and colder, the rivers and lakes shrink and the pasturage is reduced. This cuts down the food supply and forces the nomads to rampage into the land of their neighbors. Speaking of the thirteenth century, Arnold Toynbee declared that the "paroxysm of aridity coincided in date with the demoniac eruption of the Mongols, and it will be seen that the physiographical recoil towards humidity likewise corresponds in date with the rapid ebb of the Mongols." (A Study of History, vol. III, p. 439).

Although the outbursts and recessions of the nomads were periodic, the rigid periodization was too mechanical and many scholars have discredited climate as the sole factor. Huntington suggests that four factors may have impelled the huge migration of the nomadic peoples, namely: climate, the inherent quality of the people especially as manifested by the leaders, the pull exerted by the wealth and the opportunities of the agricultural lands, and the push exerted by over-population. (Mainsprings of Civilization, p. 568).

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A period of peace and prosperity would allow the population of the nomads to increase. However, in the desolate steppes, food was dependent upon flocks of sheep and herds of cattle and horses, and the people, unlike their sedentary neighbors, did not have the tradition nor the facilities for food storage. Any sudden change in climate which caused a reduction of pasturage and water supply would create a "time of troubles" and compel the nomadic people to migrate in search of food and pasturage.

When the nomads were experiencing a "time of troubles," the lush riches and the military weakness of the settled peoples would tempt border tribes to encroach upon the agrarian regions. Distress and discontent at home and the lure of wealth abroad furnish the push and the pull of Toynbee's theories. When the leavening of bold leadership and ideas were added, the nomads often were induced to burst out from the steppes of Asia and to set the world in commotion.

Other scholars entirely discount the influence of climate and seek the explanation for the advance and withdrawal of the nomads in social and political conditions. Owen Lattimore, who has given much thought to this question, (cf. Inner Asian Frontiers, passim), lists a number of reasons other than climate, for the eruption of the nomads. There were, for example, technological factors like the invention of the powerful compound bow and the technique of mounted archery which gave the nomads an edge over their enemies.

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The Chinese had to adopt the nomad bow and the technique of mounted archery before they could meet the nomads on equal terms.

Another factor, according to Lattimore, was the pastoral economy of the nomads which led to migration. Horses and cattle cannot graze on fields that have been cropped by sheep and goats. Therefore, the nomads whose livelihood depended upon their herds and flocks, must continually seek new pastures. The claims to pasturelands and the right of movement led to wars. The continuous wars stimulated the rise of leaders, hard-headed men who survived the hurly-burly of warfare and politics of the steppes and deserts. Finally, a supreme leader emerged who would then weld the various groups into a grand confederation strong enough to encroach upon the neighboring regions for land, for the profits of trade, and for revenue and tribute from the conquered peoples.

According to Lattimore, the nomads who invaded the marginal zone between the steppes and the settled lands, were not pure nomads but were semi-settled. Their wars of conquest were not only for pastures for their herds and flocks but for land, for the riches of the cities, and for the proceeds of commerce. Moreover, the cycles of their invasion and retreat began only a few centuries before the Christian era when they split from the settled peoples on China's northwestern frontier and when they acquired the technology of nomadic warfare. The true nomads on the steppes evolved from the mixed nomads, not vice versa.

The migrations which led to conquest over a wide area, such as those carried out by the Huns, the Turks and the Mongols, normally did not begin with the true nomads but with the mixed nomads, and were caused by (1) a group breaking away from the mixed nomads in order to become true nomads; or (2) a group breaking away from the true nomads in order to revert back to mixed nomadism. The Huns, Turks, and Mongols had fixed bases of operation and their conquests were for land.

Under these circumstances, according to Lattimore, the cycles of nomadic expansion and withdrawal each went through the following process:

1. The maintenance of large armies of mounted warriors to conquer land for the profit of trade and revenue from subject peoples;
2. A dichotomy of nomad society. The nomadic warriors who went forth to conquer and who were left to garrison conquered territories had control of the sources of wealth but declined militarily. The warriors who stayed in the steppes as the military reserve continued to be warlike but gradually became impoverished;
3. A split within the nomad state between those in the conquered areas and those in the steppes, leading to decline and and withdrawal.

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6. Summary

In summary, the workings of the historical process represented

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GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

I. The Physical Setting

A. Location and Importance.

13 Lanchou, the capital of Kansu, is the geographic center of China. If one draws a horizontal line from west to east and a vertical line from south to north, he finds that the northwest quarter of China just covers the whole area of Sinkiang, Kansu, and Chinghai or Koko Nor. Owing to scanty rainfall, a great part of the area is a vast desert, dotted with oases and strips of cultivation, It is generally classified as the interior continental desert and steppe region of China.

771 184 From the viewpoint of geographic location, Northwest China, especially Kansu Province, is a transitional zone of cultural variations. Religions, for example, are different. From Kansu northwestward to Sinkiang, the majority of the inhabitants are Mohammedans. Contrarily, southeastward to China proper, there is more Buddhism and Christianity.

241 233 182 Again, Kansu furnishes a natural boundary for economies. From the eastern end of Kansu southeastward the area is mainly agricultural, while the area northwest from Kansu is largely a pastoral region. People there are adapted to a nomadic life with a relatively self-sufficient economy. As a result, the trading activity is small. It is limited to a small village or an isolated oasis.

131 The area is adjacent to the Mongolian People's Republic on the north and northwest and the Tibetan Plateau on the southwest. Moreover, it lies in the path of direct communication with Soviet Russia through the narrow plain of the Kansu Corridor by way of Sinkiang in the extreme northwest. It is an important part of China as a strategic pivot linking Asia and Europe and it is the great joint between Inner Asia and the Pacific coast.

133 B. Surface Features.

The physical features of northwest China generally may be classified as plateaus. However, viewed in terms of the present relief of Kansu, the high lands are all located along the southern border of the province. They are generally called the Ch'i-lien-shan, the Nan-shan, or the Southern Mountains. This mountain range forms the natural boundary between Kansu to the north and Chinghai to the south. There are a few passes situated in this mountain range with an average height of 12,900 feet. The length of the Chi-lien-shan is roughly estimated at 570 miles. Its east end is dissected by the streams of the upper Yellow River into a few isolated

161 Beyond the Alashan, Nan-shan, and Te-chi-shih mountains in
133 most parts of Chinghai, western Kansu including most parts
of former Ninghsia covering the Alashan and Khara Gobi
deserts and all Sinkiang, where the annual rainfall is generally
below five inches except in the higher elevations, the small
population is intensely concentrated in a number of small
isolated oases scattered along the base of the snow-capped
high ranges. Numerous snow-fed mountain streams come down
the Nan-shan, the Kunlun, the Tien-shan and the Altai.
[312] Before they disappear in the nearby deserts, they provide a
reliable source of water for irrigation. Hence a string of
487 oases are scattered between deserts and mountains. The so-
312 called Kansu corridor along the Nan-shan, the Silk Road
361 along the Kunlun, the Tien-shan nan-lu (Southern Road)
161 and the Tien-shan pei-lu (Northern Road) along the south and
north foothills of the Tien-shan (Celestial Mountain) Range
are all developed along these oases which provide the only
available natural stations along all the trade routes through
Northwest China and Central Asia. These oases are the sole
centers of human settlement for agriculture, horticulture,
animal husbandry, and pastoralism. Since they are so intensively
487 cultivated and populated, in most cases they form administrative
36 hsien or county seats, i.e. from southeast to northwest along
634 the Kansu corridor, Ku-lang, Wu-wei, Yung-chang, Shan-
161 tan, Chang-yeh, Lin-tse, Kao-tai, Chiu-chuan, Yü-men,
An-hsi, Tun-huang, etc. Along the Silk Road at the foot of
the Kunlun Mountains east-westward are No-chiang, Chieh-mo,
Keriya (Yu-tien), Tse-leh, Lo-pu, Ho-tien, Mo-yü, Pi-shan,
Yeh-chang, Sha-che, Ko-ko, Yingihissar (Ying-chi-sha),
Shu-le, etc. Along the Tien-shan
nan-lu, east-westward are Qumol (Hami), Shan-shan, Turfan,
Ho-sho, Yen-chi, Korla, Lun-tai, Ku-che, Pai-chang, Wen-
su, Aksu, Ke-ping, Pa-chu, Ka-shih, Shu-fu, etc. Along the
Tien-shan pei-lu, east-westward are Barkul (Chenhsi), Chitai,
Urumchi, Chang-chi, Ching-hua, Sui-lai, Wu-su, and Ching-ho
to Sui-ting in the Ili valley. Thus the distribution of population
occurs in clusters or isolated pockets of densely peopled
areas, dotted along the foot of the high mountains, but separated
by desert wastes.

361 In the enclosed upland Tsaidam and Koko Nor Basins of
233 Chinghai province, a small number of nomads exist mainly in
311 the part which is oriented toward and exposed to the limited
moist wind, where the grassland is suitable for limited grazing.
The location varies from basin to basin. In the Tsaidam, the
pasture is found in the southeastern part, while in the northwestern
part lies the Koko Beile Desert. In the case of the Koko Nor Basin,
the climatic orientation is reversed. Similar conditions prevail

also in Dzungaria. There a large expanse of pasture land prevails more in the south along the northern foothill slope of the Tien-shan than the north along the southern side of the Altai.

C. Population Trend and Its Significance

1. The Changing Trend of the Northwest in Comparison with Other Major Regions.

The population of the Northwest as in the rest of the country has been on the increase in spite of the limited arable and irrigable land resulting from inadequate rainfall, and the mountainous terrain, as well as the frequent earthquakes in Kansu and repeated Moslem disturbances. It was reported that more than 246,000 people were killed by the great earthquake of Hai-yüan, Ching-ning, and Tung-wei in eastern Kansu in December, 1920, and the Moslem uprisings of 1861-1874, 1895, and 1944. Long before the 1953 census was taken, there has been an incessant influx of people in large numbers. A gradual increase is marked by various estimates and reports. For example, in regard to the population estimation of Sinkiang Province, the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1910 gave the figure of 2,670,000 and 2,519,579 in 1923; the record taken from "Le Temps" of April 5, 1934, is around 5,000,000. According to a nation-wide regional survey taken by the Agricultural College of Nanking University in the period from 1928-1933, the annual rate of natural increase of the Northwest was at 11.5 per thousand which was exceeded only by the North China Plain, as illustrated by Table XII.[1,2,A]

According to the 1953 census report for the nation as a whole, the average birth rate is thirty-seven per thousand, average death rate, seventeen, and average annual natural increase, twenty.

Table XII clearly indicates that the annual natural increase rate of the Northwest is due to a smaller death rate rather than a higher birth rate as compared with other regions. This might be the result of a healthier, drier climate rather than better living conditions or medical care. The 1953 census report gives an even larger natural increase for the nation due to a higher birth rate and a lower death rate. The gradual population increase of the Northwestern provinces is also shown by Table XIII.[2,A] this table shows a considerable increase for the provinces of Shensi and Kansu (including Ninghsia) especially. As for Chinghai and Sinkiang, although the increase is not so pronounced, nearly one third of a million for the former and 1.1 million increase for the latter are indicated. These bring a total increase of over thirteen million (more than half the original number in seven years) for the four

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/Kansu Monguors/

have very scanty beards, and there is seldom any growth of hair on the body.

e. economic activities

The Mongours gave up their nomadic way of life and became farmers. They cultivate barley, wheat, peas, rapeseed, colza, hemp and potatoes. The second important economic resource is livestock, consisting of horses, cows, mules, pigs and sheep. The Mongours are also good hunters and fishermen. The Mongours now live in brick and mud houses resembling their former tent (yurt).

Until recently the Mongours wore their national costumes. However, when the Communists took over they ordered them to wear only Chinese clothing.

By religion, the Mongours are Lamaist-Buddhists.

2. Other groups

Besides the Mongours, there are Ölöts and Torguts living in Kansu. They are similar in all respects to the Olots and Torguts of Sinkiang.

C. The Mongols of Chinghai

1. General characteristics

Due to the new partition of the province, some of the Mongours now belong to Chinghai Province. Very little is known about the Eastern Mongols living around the Tsaidam and Kokonor areas. However, all explorers' reports say that they have become more and more Tibetanized and are forgetting their own Mongolian language. They are still pastoral nomads like the Ölots and the Torguts of Sinkiang.

2. Hordes

When Tafel (between 1905 and 1908) travelled in the Chinghai area he found the following groups of Mongols:

(1) Wang-ka or the horde of the Chinghai Wang, consisting of 150-350 families, of which one group nomadized on the Dulan-gol, west of the Kokonor, and the other group lived around the monasteries of Gomba-soma and Minia-ta;

(2) the horde of the Muri Wang, about 50 families, which nomadized on the upper course of the Ta-tung River;

(3) the horde of the Kukut Bei-le, about 200 families, which nomadized around the Serkhe-nor, northeast of the Tsaidam swamps;

(4) the horde of the Kurluk Bei-tse, about 800 families which nomadized around the Bagha Tsaidam area;

(5) the horde of the Merkhe Bei-tse westwards of 4; there is no information about population figures.

(6) the horde of Shui-hia Bei-tse in the valley above Bamba; there is no further information about population figures.

(7) the horde of the Gobi Gung, which nomadized in the area of Tankar;

/The Nomadic Tibetans/

In those cases where a man has more than one wife, each wife must have her own tent which will be within the area of the encampment assigned to the husband. Within the tent the wife frequently has full authority. It is she who welcomes and looks after the guests and to whom farewells must be formally made.

As is the case with most of Tibet, the problem of polyandrous unions remains unclear. One authoritative source assigns such unions to the nomads, and another will insist that it is a phenomenon of the sedentary Tibetans. Each produces logical explanations for its appearance in the one and not in the other. Moreover, the Tibetans themselves will state arbitrarily that it is commoner in one group or the other, but again there is no unanimity of opinion. Out of all the conflicting accounts, it can be deduced that polyandry exists, probably, in both nomadic and sedentary Tibetan populations and that peculiar local situations account for its prevalence in one or the other area. However, it is doubtful that it is uniformly practiced by any section of the population. Side by side with polyandrous families, moreover, polygynous unions are also found. Most common, is a more or less brittle monogamy.

Since the people of the black tents practice transhumance, their nomadic activities are measured in terms of elevation, rather than actual distance covered. From late spring through fall the encampments as units climb to successively higher pastures and then descend again. Winter finds them at their lowest elevation and the group is no longer a tent-circle. Instead of the regular circular arrangement of the yak-hair tents, the winter settlement may consist of sod-covered huts, which may be of wattle and daub construction, rammed earth, tent-roofed sod walls or similar materials. There is no regular arrangement of the huts, because the factors which led to the arrangement of the campsites are not operative.

The different activities around the year help dictate the limits of communal action. The short growing seasons of the successive pastures, necessitate frequent shifts. Thus eight or nine movements between winters are not uncommon. The tasks of striking camp, keeping the herds along the route and reestablishing the circles involve maximum cooperation from all involved. None can travel with impunity ahead or behind the others. The encampments represent military units because raids and stealing herds are recognized as rungs on the ladder to success.

In winter, the activities are more diversified. Gone is the constant vigilance against human and animal foes. Gone too, is the necessity of frequent, simultaneous uprooting and reestablishment. Life is conducted at a more leisurely and individual pace. Many of the nomads form trading caravans, which will journey beyond the settlements of the Tibetan farmers to trade their wool, hides, and other products among the Chinese Moslems. These caravans may be composed of some of the men of a single

236 (T. H. Shen, p. 326.) The following is in 1,000 metric tons:
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Province	Sheep Wool	Camel Hair	Cashmere
Kansu	3,611	180	30
Ninghsia	1,846	299	92
Chinghai	4,840	60	-
Sinkiang	12,853	22	10
Total	23,150	561	132

241 In Chinghai and elsewhere in the region fertilizer is scarce and the thick sod on the uncultivated hilltops is burnt in piles to help meet the fertilizer requirements of the fields below. The
311 following is a description of the principle livestock raising area
• 233 in Kansu and Chinghai. "The pasture land in Kansu and in the agricultural part of Chinghai is mostly the hill land far away from
[423] the cultivated fields and villages. It is not owned by farmers individually or collectively. It is public land. The right to graze these pastures is determined by the natural location of the villages in relation to these hills rather than by law. The nearest villages have more chance to use it. Sometimes one finds several villages grazing their sheep on the same hills without trouble. But if too many villages use the same pasture a definite agreement is made between the villages to limit certain villages to particular pastures. Such occasions rarely occur because the increase in sheep is naturally in accordance with the amount of pasture available. It is only in time of severe drought that the pastures are overstocked.

311 "The pasture of nomadic Chinghai (formerly a part of Tibet) is
423 also public land but different tribes and clans have the exclusive
233 right to use only such land as has been allotted to them by the government or by tradition. Within the boundaries of a certain tribe the pasture is open to all its member families, but no family owns any particular lot. There is no fencing or walls.

311 "The condition of these pastures is determined by annual rain-
233 fall. More rain and snow assure better grass. No human effort, such as seeding, manuring, irrigation or drainage is ever applied." (Buck, Land Utilization p. 176.)

4. Forestry

313 The following chart indicates the percentage of forest land for the region.

Province	Percentage of land in Forest
Kansu	6.0
Ninghsia	4.0
Shensi	16.0
Chinghai	2.0

If we leave out Shensi as a section of the Northwest, as George B. Cressy does, the Northwest is reported to have only one twentieth as much standing timber as the Northeast region (Heilungkiang, Kirin, Liaoning), or 197,429,814 cubic meters, which is located

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Where the loess has been washed away shales and sandstones are revealed, and often right on the tops of the spurs there are outcroppings of a sort of conglomerate of waterworn pebbles cemented together. The loess mountains in this neighbourhood are little cultivated, being covered with poor-looking pasture, which supports scanty herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. Finally there is a descent of a few hundred feet to reach the city of Yungshou Hsien, which lies a little below the crest of the ridge, on the shoulder of a spur up which ascends the Great West Road from the Hsian plains.

Yungshou consists of one street running up the ridge and is merely a walled-in section of the big road; it is a replica of Linyu, with a little more life in it owing to its position on the Kansu highway. We had passed through it two years previously almost to a day on our way to the latter province, the season of the year being the end of May.

Our next objective was the district city of Ch'unhua (locally Shunhua) distant two marches of 90 li each. Leaving Yungshou we followed up the main road for a few li to regain the crest of the range, where I shot some cock pheasants in almost the identical spot as two years before, and then turned eastwards once more along the top of the ridge for 25 li to a cave village. Here the ridge ends in rolling uplands of loess, the beginning, from this side, of the great loess plateau of Western Shensi. The Belgian railway (Lung Hai) from Hsian to Lanchou will, it is said, follow up the Wei River, the line of the cart road being apparently too difficult; an easier route might perhaps be found following up the slope of this plateau through Sanshui district to Ch'ingyang, and thence through Northern Kansu. The upper portions of these rolling plains where we met them are uncultivated and covered with poor sheep pasture, apparently owing to the lack of water, the one great drawback to the loess; and one might imagine oneself on the grasslands of Eastern Mongolia, until, on attempting to cross the plateau in any direction away from the trail, one almost immediately fetches up against a chasm in the loess with perpendicular walls perhaps hundreds of feet deep. Lower down these uplands are one vast cornfield

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the North West after Hsian Fu, and all the trade there is in the province converges upon it. Traders from Tientsin, Szechuan, Turkestan, Mongolia, Siberia, Tibet, and even India may be met with in its streets.

Kansu is considered by the Chinese of other provinces to be a dreadfully bitter place (*k'u ti hen*), nothing but wild Mahomedans and no rice to speak of; but for a European it is in many ways the pick of the eighteen provinces. Lanchou lies a little under 5000 feet above sea-level, which in that latitude means a white man's climate, no mosquitoes, and the wearing of European clothing all the year round. As regards food, excellent wheat flour, mutton, and milk are always obtainable, the two latter often scarce in other parts of China, and game is extraordinarily abundant in many regions. I have only one complaint to make against Kansu and that is the brackish water in certain parts. At Lanchou itself there are springs of sweet water at Wuch'uan Shan, a collection of temples on the hills immediately to the south of the city, and the Yellow River water is also good after it has been allowed to stand and clear itself.

Lanchou being situated near some of the best sheeps-wool producing regions of Asia, and the climate being essentially a northern one, common sense indicates it as a suitable centre for a cloth-making industry. This was recognized as long ago as the days of the great General Tso, who established a cloth factory, which was subsequently modernised during the comparatively progressive and constructive era preceding the Revolution by the introduction of modern foreign machinery and several Belgian instructors. But the Revolution put an end to progress in this enterprise as in so many others, and the foreigners have now all departed, and the factory does not flourish. All the same, on my departure from Lanchou, the Governor insisted on my taking away, as mementoes of progress in Kansu, two locally manufactured blankets, made, I think, of camels' hair, which were really first-class articles, and hard to beat anywhere for warmth and good wearing utility. There ought to be a large market for native-made cloth amongst the Kokonor Tibetans and beyond, but the trade seems never to have been developed successfully. There are also other so-called factories, for the manufacture of matches, soap, etc.,

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Leaving T'ao Chou the trail runs north-west over a low pass in the red clay hills, traverses a cultivated valley trending south, and ascends by easy gradients to another pass, whence there is a particularly fine view over the Min Shan to the south of the T'ao River. Beyond this point Chinese cease to be seen. From this pass the track descends steeply to another stream flowing south and then continues north-west up a flat shallow valley bounded by bare grassy hills. In this valley and its neighbourhood there are several Tibetan villages, in one of which, about 50 li from T'ao Chou, we passed the night; its name has escaped me, if I ever heard it. These villages are under the control of the Choni chief, and preparations had been made to receive us in the headman's house. The Tibetans are usually considered to live under the hardest and most filthy conditions, which is certainly so in the case of these Amdowa where they are nomads on the grass-lands. But the houses of the headmen of the agricultural Tibetan villages, both here and elsewhere where we rested in them, showed an astonishingly high standard of comfort and were superior to any Chinese house I have seen. These houses are solidly built of wood and stone of two stories, and the rooms of the one in which we were lodged here were spotlessly clean and panelled with stained wood.

An hour's march beyond this village the trail emerged from the valley after topping an easy pass, where marmots were very abundant, sitting up in front of their holes and dodging in as one approached them. This pass is here the boundary of the real grass-lands, and apparently the border of the Choni chief's territory in this direction. Beyond it all cultivation ceases, there are no more houses, and one enters a region of shallow valleys and low mountains (elevation about 11,000 feet) dotted with large herds of yak, sheep, and ponies grazing round the black rectangular tents of the Tibetan nomads, here, as elsewhere, called Drokba. These grassy steppes, always referred to by the Chinese as *Ts'ao Ti*, bound China everywhere on the north and west, and always one ascends to them through a region of broken mountains, whether it be from Szechuan or Kansu up to the highlands of the Tibetan plateau, or from Chihli or Shansi up to the highlands of Mongolia; and always it

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From Tama Ying the trail runs south-west across rolling grassy downs, on which cattle and sheep are pastured, gradually approaching the main range of the Nan Shan on the left front. We saw large numbers of antelope on this march and in places the pasturage was extraordinarily luxuriant and the grass up to the ponies' knees. The stage is a short one of only some 50 li and for the last hour the trail runs through fields of barley to reach Maying Tung, another of the old walled forts with which this region is dotted, surrounded by farms and patches of cultivation. It lies close under the Nan Shan, whose rocky peaks rise above the snow-line, and a few li from the mouth of the gorge leading up to the Kokonor plateau. This is the well-known passage through the Nan Shan called the Pien Tu K'ou, and is a remarkable cleft in the huge wall of rock presented by the main range, from which there issues a torrent flowing north towards Kanchou.

From Maying Tung to Êpo on the Kokonor plateau is a long march, called 100 li, which took us over twelve hours. The trail runs across the plain for an hour or two to reach the foot of the mountains and then enters the Pien Tu K'ou, a narrow gorge hemmed in by precipitous mountains. The trail up the gorge is very bad, and is made more difficult by its constantly crossing and recrossing the torrent, which descends in a succession of cascades and, in the summer, is only just fordable. We were told that camels negotiate this road in the winter, when it is probably much easier. Every time we forded the stream I expected our mules to come to grief, the donkeys, which accompanied us in the capacity of grain carriers for the mules, being in places nearly submerged. At length the inevitable happened, and one of the mule litters turned turtle in mid-stream owing to the mules being swept off their feet by the current; all the contents were washed down stream and the occupant, one of the servants, nearly drowned. This incident, and the subsequent collection of as much flotsam and jetsam as we could recover down stream, delayed us for an hour or so. The gorge is uninhabited except for two likin huts which seem to have gone out of business. After some five hours' march the going improves and the precipitous mountains give way to grassy slopes dotted with herds of yak and flocks of sheep

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and the black rectangular tents of nomad Tibetans, the usual hinterland of *Ts'ao Ti* (Grass Lands), which everywhere in the north and west lie behind the border ranges of China. Apart from the nomads and their ponies, yak, and cattle, the only sign of life were the huge vultures, which were extraordinarily abundant. The final ascent to the pass is by easy gradients, and a similar descent of about 10 li brings one to Êpo, a dot of a place lying in a sea of grass.

Êpo (this is the regular romanisation of the Chinese characters, pronounced Obaw) is a small walled village and former fort situated in a shallow valley sloping from east to west, surrounded by grassy downs and backed by rocky snow capped mountains. The elevation is probably between 11,000 and 12,000 feet, and there is no cultivation, the necessary grain being brought up from below. The entire community, composed of a few Mahomedan Chinese, seemed to be engaged in the collection of wool, with occasional purchases of musk and deer horns. The latter (wapiti antlers) when old are quite cheap and are collected and sent down to China for the manufacture of glue; when in velvet they are extremely valuable and are ground up to form the well-known Chinese medicine for revivifying the old. This medicine is said to be very powerful, and I was informed by a member of our party, who here purchased a pair for a friend, that care must be exercised in taking a dose to see that the powder comes equally from both antlers, otherwise there is a grave danger that the patient may be revivified on one side only! Musk may also be profitably purchased at Êpo, and for some days afterwards our caravan was redolent with it. Wherever one may pack a pod of musk it is guaranteed to make its presence widely known. The advantage of buying musk at a place like Êpo, apart from its cheapness, is that one is pretty certain to get the genuine article, adulteration being widely practised in the trade in China.

Êpo appears to lie actually on the Kansu-Kokonor border (though boundaries are vague in those parts), and its position is of some strategic importance as commanding one of the few routes from Kansu and Mongolia up to the Kokonor, north of Hsining. We were met here by some Mahomedan braves sent up from the Hsining and Tatung

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the Kokonor (in Chinese Ch'ing Hai, meaning, like the Mongol name, "Azure Lake"), who used to be known by the Tibetan or Mongol term of "Amban," but who at the time of our visit was styled in the republican manner *Ch'ing Hai Pan Shih Chang Kuan* ("Chief Authority in charge of the Affairs of the Kokonor Territory"). Soon afterwards the post and its occupant, an old Manchu, were abolished by Yuan Shih-k'ai's Government, and the control of the Kokonor territory handed over to the Mahomedan General of Hsining. This control is of the usual vague and shadowy nature, such as has been exercised for so long by China over her outlying dependencies. The Mongol inhabitants are ruled by their own princes under China's overlordship; the Tibetans wander pretty well at will over the territory, robbing one another, the Mongols, and the Chinese, and generally pay but little respect to their nominal Chinese masters. It is possible that the Mahomedans will now take measures to bring them more under control[1].

We remained some days at Hsining, but unfortunately had no leisure to visit either the Kokonor Lake or the famous monastery of T'a-erh Ssu. In the intervals of official business we were hospitably entertained by the Mahomedan General, the Manchu Amban, the Taoyin, and other officials. The former, like most of the Mahomedan leaders we met, was a bluff, hearty soldier and a delightful companion; he had served under T'ung Fu-hsiang at Peking in 1900.

Tanko and Hsining are the headquarters of the great Kokonor wool trade, which has been going on for twenty years or more and has now reached very large dimensions. This wool is produced on the grass lands of the Kokonor border, and is carried by raft and boat down the Yellow River and by camel caravan across the desert to Tientsin, whence it is exported to America. The trade is largely in the hands of the foreign export firms in Tientsin who, through their compradores, maintain buying agencies at various collecting centres such as Hsining, Tanko, Kueité, Hochow, Hsünhua, Tatung, Yungan, and Êpo on the

[1] Such measures have since been taken, with the result that the Tibetans, and more especially the lamas, have on several occasions risen in arms against the Mahomedans, and the peace of the Kokonor border has been seriously disturbed.

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927
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172 wandering through the deserted temple-courts, where huge, grotesque, clay-images of gods loomed, we perceived, in the corner of a small shrine, two men fast asleep, with their heads pillowed on their bulging cash-bags. A few moments later, we saw these same individuals quietly remove the stones barricading a side door, through which they then slipped and vanished. The action seemed suspicious, for the honest traveller in China is always ready to exchange road-information with other passers-by. We therefore asked the old woman who they might be, but for answer she drew one of us by the sleeve into the recesses of her hovel, and then whispered: 'Nobody knows, and we dare not question them, but they have been hiding here for two days.'

233 Having explored the shadow-filled temple, we proceeded to visit the lonely guardians of a camel encampment, whose tents were pitched about a quarter of a mile distant, where the animals fed on the prickly herbage abundant in the neighbourhood. Seeing us coming, the drover called in his fierce dogs, who at a word slunk behind the tents. Round these the camel packs were symmetrically stacked in a semicircle, while the browsing camels themselves were to be seen outlined against the horizon.

000 The head-man now came forward, and to our surprise we found ourselves confronted by a Lanchow College graduate, the son of just such a wealthy house as that we had lately visited at Fuyi; and presently, over a cup of tea, a delightful hour followed of unconventional, human intercourse, not only with this intelligent, well-educated man, but also with the drovers, for China is a land where a real, though unconscious, democracy exists. When we rose to leave, our host gave the signal for rounding-up, and all the savage dogs then rushed

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Our new encampment stood in a brook bed filled with mighty granite boulders, bordered by high poplars and willow shrubs (Plate LXXVII). Here we were overtaken by an emissary of the dsassak (banner-leader) of Barun who presented me with a khádar and requested me to visit the dsassak in the plains, in Barun Kurä, where he was staying for a month to recite prayers. I promised to go. But since I had been warned on all sides not to go down into the hot, mosquito-filled plain with my yak bullocks, I first marched south for a whole day, up the Wulasetä Valley, (1) at the outlet of which stood our

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1. Ulästä, meaning "region of poplars." The "poplar and willow oasis" just before the river emerges into the plain has given it its name. Rockhill, Diary, p. 166, however, is of a different opinion.

previous camp. The region offered little that was attractive or inviting. Barren, desolate rubble terraces were to be seen everywhere, and only after we were a dozen kilometers from the Tsaidam Plain in the mountains was there finally a scant growth of grass. The cattle herds of the Mongols were able to find somewhat adequate amounts of grass only above 3,700 meters. Far back in the valley we came upon about twenty yurts of the Barun nomads. I decided to stay here and give my caravan animals a somewhat longer rest. The bullocks were at the end of their strength, in fact, on the last few marches I had lost four more. Two of them had to be left behind in our last camp at the mouth of the Wulasetä Valley. /346/ When we were ready to fetch them, we found only their footprints together with those of a horse's hoofs, leading out into the Tsaidam Plain. They had been stolen and I never saw them again. (1)

1. Dyoba Dyentsen told me that the dsassak himself had had them removed.

On the day after our arrival in this camp, the dsassak of Barun visited me in person, to my great astonishment. First a mounted courier came dashing up, behind him came the dsassak in the midst of ten horsemen. A clumsy figure, somewhat over 1.65 meters tall, an uncouth Caliban as one could see from a distance, stopped 100 centimeters in front of my tent, was assisted awkwardly from his horse, and came toward me. He had just reached the age of 45. He, as well as his escort, wore the Tibetan gaily-colored caftan, except

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